Utilisation of Central Road Fund

565. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether pace of utilisation of money accruing to the State Governments from the Central Road Fund for upgradation of State roads, is at slow pace;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the steps taken for speedy completion of road projects by the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 2000-01 out of a provision of Rs. 990 crore for State Roads from Central Road Fund, an amount of Rs. 332.02 crore was released to all States/ Union Territories in the first instance having regard to the fact that further funds will be released to States/Union Territories on receipt of Utilisation Certificate and progress report from them. Till now, out of Rs. 332.02 crore released during 2000-01, utilisation certificates for the amount of Rs. 41.13 crore only have been received from some States and this amount has already been released to these States.

(c) The States/Union Territories have been requested to expedite the progress of works sanctioned from Central Road Fund and send Utilisation Certificates to enable further release of funds.

Private sector participation in construction of highways

566. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the internal/external private sector companies having shown interest for investment in highways during the years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002;

(b) whether Government have, till date, announced any special incentives for private sectors who are desirous of investment in highways;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) The Indian and foreign private sector companies have shown interest for investment in the development of National Highways through private sector participation and works have been awarded to nine firms, during 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 period, on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) and Annuity basis.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. To encourage the private sector investment in highway sector, Government has extended various special incentives in the form of tax concessions, duty-free import of modern high capacity equipment, capital grant, permitting foreign direct investment, external commercial borrowings and providing land free from encumbrances.

(d) Does not arise.

Increase in road accidents

†567. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India ranks third in world in the matter of road accidents;

(b) whether track cards are not demanded from 87 per cent of the drivers and the transport department do not test their knowledge about the steps to be taken in case of an emergency;

(c) if so, whether the increase in the number of road accidents in the country is due to untrained drivers; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) No, Sir. The World Road Statistics 1999, as compiled by International Road Federation, ranks India as fourth in number of road accident.

(b) The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 does not mandate the requirement for Track Cards at the time of issue of driving licenses. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 driving license for driving a transport vehicle is issued by the Transport Authority after being satisfied about the capability of an applicant to drive the said transport vehicle on the basis of a driving certificate issued by a recognized driving training school. The renewal of driving license is subject to such person having undergone refresher training as per the prescribed syllabus. Further,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.